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## **FUTURE ENROLLMENT AND FACILITIES TASK FORCE MEETING**

### **MINUTES**

**Tuesday, November 24, 2009**

**Oliver Administration Building**

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#### **Present**

**Appointed Task Force: Karen Lynch, Chair, Denise Arsenault and John Bento**

**Task Force Members: Karen Binder, Randy Cloutier, Cara Cromwell, Edward Mara, Susan Rancourt, Melinda Thies and Diane Williamson**

**Guest: Alex Skerry (Roger Williams University student)**

**Karen Lynch called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM.**

#### **Public Comment**

**None**

#### **Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION: Denise Arsenault motioned to approve the minutes to the October 27, 2009 Meeting; Karen Lynch seconded. The motion**

**passed unanimously.**

**Denise Arsenault informed the group that Joe Ciullo will not be able to continue as a Task Force member for medical reasons.**

**Karen Lynch stated the presentation to the full committee has been pushed back to February. After a discussion with Melinda Thies and Denise Arsenault she feels the recommendation is going to come down to a combination of short term plans with triggers for a long term recommendation.**

**COA #1;XMaximize current school space, appears the most feasible. A program to entice Bristol people across town lines is the responsibility of the Superintendent. Melinda said we need to consider an impetus as to what are the critical issues in the District to open a program; funding sources are needed for teacher salaries and the forecast for state and local funding is dismal, and despite growing populations, a request for increased funding would have to be supported by need.**

**Possible triggers for the long term plan were discussed;Xperhaps classroom numbers above a certain set point or state mandates; triggers should be determined by Administration and the School Committee; finances may outweigh the needs of the students. John Bento suggested a study in the form of a questionnaire; would**

taxpayers be willing to give \$5 per year to support new programs. Melinda said we may be looking at some cuts even this year.

Denise Arsenault felt Byfield was viable as a COA #3 option. Karen had gotten tax assessment information; Byfield is \$2.4M and Oliver is 1.1M; she suggested a meeting with the Bristol Town Council to ascertain their interest in sharing these buildings before we make too many plans based on assumptions. Seeing as how the town is overwhelmed with empty buildings, both Diane Williamson and Diane Mederos feel there will be interest on the part of the Town. Denise Arsenault mentioned that Ray Cordeiro had said he would love to have Byfield as the town hall. Renovating Byfield for use as a school will be costly; we would have to be in a very desperate way and this would be a long term solution. Julia Steiny had written an article that enrollment is going the other way; but we have a number of classrooms at 24 and 25 students. Since the long terms plans include these buildings, all agreed the Blue Ribbon Committee should be invited to brief this Task Force on their 5 to 10 year plans for them.

The short term plan would be to utilize Warren, but not immediately; if a program is created, that program would move to the new building and would pull students from across the district; then we would have to make sure it relieves the places we need help with; if Warren grows and there is no room for Bristol students, we are in a real jam. The hope is to implement certain programs quickly; if enrollment spikes over the summer, we will be in a fix. Changing or amending the

enabling legislation is the most viable route. John Bento consulted Walter Felag; the School Committee, by majority vote, would have to present a plan, supported by just cause, to the Warren and Bristol Town Councils who would have to support it. The local legislators would then host it at the Statehouse; if this were accomplished by mid-February, it could be passed by June. Unlike the last time, the Committee will be aware when it comes before the Warren Town Council so they can defend the request. Emergency situations can be passed in a month; this time. An amendment would be more likely to pass than a change to legislation; no one outside this area would have an interest; this being a budget-neutral request makes it more probable to pass. This is in preparation for a desperate situation that could arise.

Diane Williamson fully supports a meeting with the Bristol Town Council and the Bristol Blue Ribbon Committee who could also use the information in planning for the empty school buildings. Diane Williamson will work with Diane Mederos to arrange a meeting for the COA #3 subgroup with the Bristol Blue Ribbon Committee and possibly other members of the Town Council. Paul Silva had previously said he would like to be included; Thursday is the best night. The Blue Ribbon Committee had talked about the District Administration moving from Oliver to a building that cannot be sold. Renovation of Byfield will cost money and this fact causes hesitation and then even higher renovation costs; using Byfield for administration would provide another place on the Common for use

on the Fourth of July, other town functions and by other concerns. The Blue Ribbon Committee should be part of the briefing to the School Committee. This discussion will be helpful in updating the Town's 5-year plan and comprehensive plan as well as the District's 5-year plan.

At 7:20 PM, Alex Skerry left the meeting.

### **COA Subgroup Updates**

**COA #1: Maximizing Current School Space** (John Bento, Leader, Rebecca Fikiet (absent), Susan Rancourt and Cheryl Burns (absent))

The focal point is on Hugh Cole, which would be a temporary fix. An educationally appropriate research-based program should be determined by administration; we should be a little more vague on collection of students than one track from Warren and one track from Bristol. We must be realistic about the sustainability of the program; also there is no guarantee that the program would draw from the areas we are overcrowded; good marketing would be beneficial; it will be difficult to change the mindset of Rockwell parents.

Regarding the legislative piece, we must do a study on the cost of adding a track and the best method to attract students.

**COA #2: Build an Additional School (Cara Cromwell, Leader, John Bento and Ken Marshall (absent))**

**A new school is unrealistic.**

**COA #3: Use Empty Buildings (Denise Arsenault, Leader, David Barboza (absent), Karen Binder, Joe Ciullo (absent), Melissa Labonte (absent), Diane Mederos (absent), John Saviano (absent) and Diane Williamson)**

**As discussed earlier, a meeting will be arranged by Diane Williamson for this groups to meet with Diane Mederos, the Blue Ribbon Committee and possibly other members of the Town Council to discuss the use of buildings for the benefit of all concerned; hopefully to take place in December. It was suggested to Diane Williamson that Joe DaSilva of RIDE be consulted at some point; this will be after the meeting with the Town.**

**COA #4: Open a Charter / Lab School (Ed Mara, Leader, Jennifer Berry (absent), Ken Marshall (absent), Kristen Quinn (absent) and Paul Silva (absent))**

**Collaboration with Roger Williams University is at a standstill, although approached, they are not forecast to do anything in the next five years; however, those discussions will continue on the Superintendent's level.**

## **Next Meeting**

**Tuesday, January 19, 2010, 6:00 PM in the Oliver Administration Building**

## **Presentation to School Committee**

### **Plan:**

„Í Identify debriefers

„Í Debriefers meet

„Í John Bento will prepare a PowerPoint presentation in consultation with Melinda; facts and assumptions will be mentioned up front; advantages and disadvantages will be based on fact

„Í Finalize content

„Í Rehearse iV February 2

„Í Presentation iV February 8

## **Adjournment**

**MOTION: At 7:42 PM, Denise Arsenault, seconded by Karen Lynch, motioned to adjourn; the motion passed unanimously.**

**/ca**